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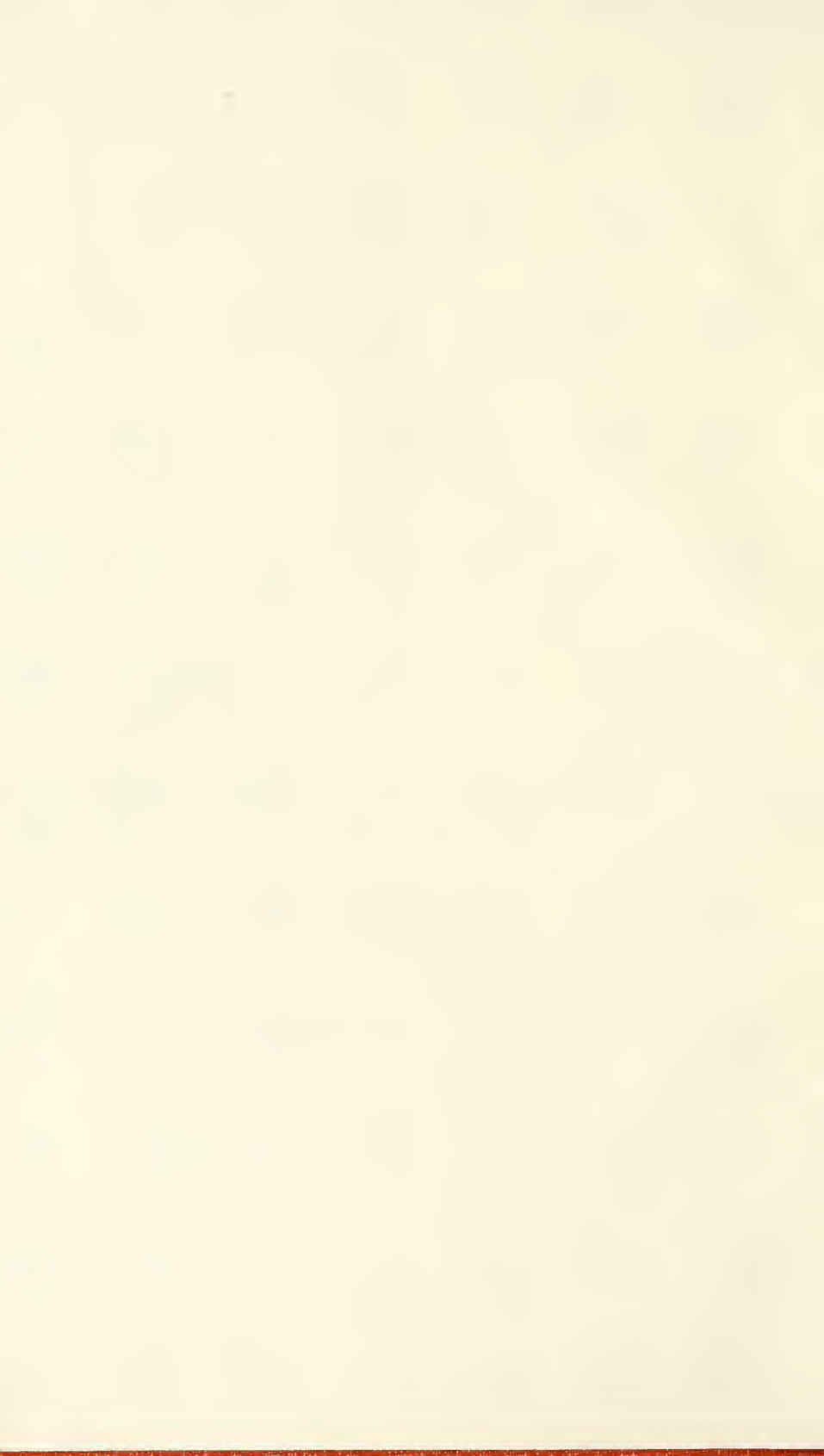


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## REMARKS

OF

HON. H. S. FOOTE, OF MISSISSIPPI,

IN THE SENATE, DECEMBER 10, 1849,

*On the Resolution to permit the Rev. THEOBALD MATHEW to sit within the Bar of the Senate.*

Mr. FOOTE said: Mr. President, it is with no little reluctance that I take part in the debate now in progress. Delicate topics have been introduced, (and these topics have to some extent been discussed also,) which I had hoped would not have been intruded upon our notice thus early. The real question before the Senate seems to me to be, whether special honor shall be done by us to a distinguished champion of the cause of temperance, on account of the eminent service which he has rendered to mankind by his activity and zeal in suppressing one of the most hideous evils which has ever made its appearance in the world. No one who knows the history of Father Mathew as the champion of temperance, can doubt that he deserves the respect and sympathy of all who feel interested in preserving the dignity and happiness of man as a moral being. In this character I have long admired him most profoundly and sympathized with him most deeply. On account of his merits as a successful advocate of temperance in two hemispheres, I feel strongly inclined to support the resolution which has been offered for according him a seat on the floor of the Senate; and so I shall certainly vote, unless it be shown that there is something in the resolution offered by the Senator from Wisconsin violative of the rules of this body, or repugnant to precedents heretofore held in respect. Indeed, I believe that the almost unanimous vote of the Senate would have been given in the support of this resolution but for the extraordinary speech delivered by the honorable Senator from New York, [Mr. SEWARD,] a few moments since. It seems that this gentleman feels authorized to say that he recognizes Father Mathew as an anti-slavery propagandist, and on this account, chiefly, does he base his support of the resolution. I cannot help hoping that he has done gross injustice to the distinguished native of the Emerald Isle alluded to, in recognizing him, as he has explicitly done, as a mere abolition incendiary. I am inclined to think, and indeed I confidently believe, that the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY,] and the equally distinguished Senator from Michigan, [Mr. CASS,] understand the attitude of Father Mathew with regard to slavery in this country far better than the Senator from New York, who has showered upon him such degrading commendations. If the honorable Senators from Michigan and Kentucky have not been egregiously misin-

formed in regard to the present opinions and plans of the venerable apostle of temperance now in our midst, he would be one of the last men in the world either to intermeddle, himself, with any portion of the domestic institutions of a republic of which he is a temporary guest, or to instigate the vicious intermeddling of others, or to sanction directly or indirectly the foul incendiarism which has at last placed in such serious jeopardy the noblest civic institutions which the wisdom of man has ever yet succeeded in establishing upon earth.

Sir, I have been so long fighting under the noble non-intervention flag, which may be seen at the masthead of that well-rigged vessel of State, of which the honorable Senator from Michigan [Mr. CASS] has been recognized as the faithful and fearless pilot, that I am not afraid to attend upon him still during the short voyage for which it would seem he has concluded to embark. Could I suppose it possible that the rumors, which have reached us relative to the present opinions of Father Mathew upon the question of slavery were true, or that he is capable of abetting in the least degree, either by word or deed, the schemes of unprincipled factionists, whose sentiments and policy are so fiercely and efficiently advocated upon this floor, instead of uniting in a proceeding intended to do him special honor, I should not hesitate to refuse him even the kind and courteous hospitalities which he everywhere so modestly and gracefully receives, as he journeys through the Republic. I regret to learn, that, when addressed by citizens of Alabama and Georgia, as to his views upon the question of slavery, he either declined responding, or responded by letters withheld from publication at his own request. I think that in this transaction he committed a great mistake, and one which will greatly impair his efficiency as a champion of temperance. But, until I receive conclusive evidence to the contrary, I must believe that he still adheres to the resolution which he assumed and made public shortly after his arrival in this country, not to connect himself at all with any of the domestic controversies in progress on this side of the Atlantic. I well recollect the scene, which occurred somewhere in the State of Massachusetts, between certain fierce abolition agitators and Father Mathew, in which these wicked incendiaries made a most indecent and ungentlemanly attempt to inveigle this venerable personage in their nefarious schemes, and to wield the influ-



ence of his name and character against the institutions of the South; and I have not forgotten the dignified and severe rebuke which he administered to these infatuated factionists, nor the scurrilous denunciations which they showered down upon him so plenteously afterwards. These facts are too recent not to be recollected. I do not wish to be understood as at all censuring the action of the honorable Senator from Alabama, [Mr. CLEMENS,] who has on this occasion gratified his friends so highly, by one of the most brilliant parliamentary *debuts* that I have ever witnessed. His conduct evinces only that decent and proper respect for public sentiment in his own noble State, specially inflamed by the circumstances stated by him, which a previous knowledge of his character and history would have induced me to anticipate from him upon an occasion like the present. Nor did my gallant colleague, [Mr. DAVIS,] in the eloquent harangue which he has just delivered in our hearing, utter one sentiment to which I do not heartily respond. The rebuke which he administered to the honorable Senator from New York, [Mr. SEWARD,] and his allies in and out of this hall, was richly deserved, as all must have felt who heard it, save, perhaps, the unhappy subjects themselves. And now, sir, let me turn my attention particularly, for a moment or two, to the Senator from the Empire State, who has so unauthorizably advocated the resolution of the honorable Senator from Wisconsin, [Mr. WALKER,] on the ground that Father Mathew is an avowed abolitionist in opinion, and is *on that account* worthy to receive signal honor at the hands of an American Senate. Why, sir, the honorable Senator must have forgotten where he was; he must have become suddenly oblivious of his official oath, which binds him to support the Constitution of the United States, whose sacred provisions guaranty perpetual protection to slavery against all foes, either foreign or domestic; without which protection, thus guaranteed, the Constitution itself would never have become part of the supreme law of the land, or the Union of these States have been established upon foundations which all true patriots hope may prove perpetual.

Sir, what object did the honorable Senator from New York purpose to attain by this extraordinary display of the morning? Is it his object merely to monopolize the sympathies of the whole Irish and Catholic population of the Republic; and, by making this resolution odious to all who respect the vital principles which are embodied in our political compact, and driving from its support all but the avowed anti-slavery members of this body, thus to establish exclusive claims to the future political support of this numerous and respectable class of American voters? Is it the acquisition of presidential honors in 1852 that has bedazzled the fancy of the honorable Senator from New York, and prompted him to utter that calumnious and deeply dishonoring panegyric upon the famed Missionary of Temperance which has awakened in this hall so profound a sentiment of surprise, of indignation, and of horror? Did I regard Father Mathew as deserving any part of the commendation bestowed upon him, in connection with the cause of abolition, by the honorable Senator from New York, instead of recognizing him as a noble philanthropist, I should feel compelled to class him with thieves, and robbers, and murderers, and mid-

night incendiaries. Did I suppose that the honorable Senator from New York had been duly authorized to give expression to the sentiments of Father Mathew upon the question of slavery, I should regard it as insulting to this body to have his name even uttered in our hearing. I must suppose, until proof to the contrary shall be adduced, that the honorable Senator from New York, whether designedly or not I will not undertake to decide, has done serious injustice to a worthy and unoffending personage, and that, in his fiery eagerness to advance a favorite but infamous cause, he has attempted to drag to his aid the influence and popularity of a great and potential name, in a manner that cannot fail to prove displeasing to all the disinterested friends of the temperance reform to be found upon the habitable globe. I venture to predict that the shrewd and sagacious Irish population of the country will infallibly detect this most bungling attempt to decoy them; and comprehending the lofty motives which actuated the honorable Senator from the Empire State in setting on foot this precious scheme of demagogical deception, they will not fail, in due season, to reward the author of it according to his intrinsic deserts.

Sir, there was a classic saying in the olden time, which all of us doubtless remember: "*Quid tetigit, id ornavit.*" The conduct of the honorable Senator from New York, and that of his abolition associates and allies, here and elsewhere, is exactly the reverse of this: *whatever they touch they defile*; contact with them and their accursed cause (politically speaking) is rank pollution; their counsels are pregnant with destruction; the downfall of our free institutions is the natural and inevitable result of their malevolent devices. On this particular occasion, the honorable Senator from New York, professing his desire to evince his personal respect for one who stands but little in need of his super-serviceable praises, has signally discredited the subject of his laudations, and awakened more or less of prejudice in bosoms where, but for the officious zeal of which I am complaining, naught but sentiments of kind respect and generous sympathy would have found admittance. The honorable Senator will not be offended, I trust, if I state to him that he has, on this occasion, rather painfully awakened a forensic reminiscence of former years, which, but for him, would perhaps never have risen up in my memory again.

I once witnessed a trial of two criminals upon a capital charge. They were defended somewhat unskillfully by a young and inexperienced attorney, who had spoken about an hour, with about as much heat and animation, at least, as has been exhibited by the honorable Senator from New York in the assertion of Father Mathew's claims to senatorial honors. The young advocate had gotten through with about half of his speech; the evidence, so far as one of the alleged malefactors was concerned, had been discussed, and the case of the associate culprit was about to be presented. The judge, who was a decidedly humane man, and had been greatly agonized with the damning character of the defence set up for the accused, leaned forward from the bench, and thus addressed the unfatigued defender of persecuted innocence: "Young man, you have already secured the conviction of one of your unfortunate clients, and I admonish you, that if you have any wish that the other should be acquitted, you will decline utter-

ing a single word in his vindication." The young lawyer took the hint, and desisted, and his client escaped the gallows. It is to be hoped that Father Mathew will be lucky enough to avoid the destruction with which he is threatened by the fatal advocacy of the Senator from New York, who, from the period of his noted contest with the State of Virginia upon the subject of the surrender of fugitive slaves, has been distinguished as an ultra abolition agitator, and an open and undisguised assailant of the most venerated guarantees of the Constitution.

In conclusion, I will take the liberty of warning that Senator that a period has almost arrived when even his eloquent tongue will be stilled upon his favorite topic. The time is not far distant when even such a formally prepared, prosy, and well-conned speech as that which he uttered this morning in our hearing will be but impatiently listened to, if listened to at all, by this august assembly; when the enlightened and patriotic people of this great Republic will indignantly denounce the noisy agents of faction who have so long disturbed the public repose by unseemly and profitless wranglings, and command them to be silent, and silent forever, whilst the Constitution and its guarantees will ride triumphant over all obstacles which a perverse sophistry has raised up to obstruct the progress of twenty millions of people to a state of felicity, of power, and of grandeur never before attained by any civilized nation; when *perfect justice* will be seen to prevail throughout our borders; when the *absolute equality* of the sovereign States of this Confederacy shall be universally acknowledged; when the domestic institutions of all the States shall be made effectually secure against the malign assaults of all foes, whether open and

direct, or covert and insidious; when the real enemies of the Constitution, *as our fathers framed it*, shall be universally recognized as the real enemies of the Union for which that Constitution has provided; when the good sense and sound patriotism of the North shall nobly concede to the South, her long-withheld rights, and the South in her turn shall punish the vile traitors within her own confines who have conspired for her overthrow, with undying infamy; and a day of resplendent glory shall dawn upon our country, before whose brightness all nations of earth shall stand in wondering admiration, and the page of history be adorned with such scenes of moral grandeur and social beatitude as have never been portrayed heretofore by human pen or pencil.

Yes, sir, the day is not distant—it is even now at hand—when faction shall no longer be permitted to encumber the machinery of government; when a patient and forbearing people will submit no further to be burdened with all the enormous expenses of government without any of the benefits of actual legislation; when a few wicked and reckless demagogues in Congress will be no longer permitted to embroil our public councils with seditious declamation, and put the happiness of the whole republic in imminent peril, in order to earn for themselves a little dishonorable notoriety; and when the wretched champions of abolition and free soil shall mourn in sackcloth and ashes over all the mischief which they have engendered, and seek in retirement and obscurity that immunity for offences perpetrated, and for still greater offences projected but counteracted, for which they will be indebted alone to the magnanimity of the people whom they have sought to betray and to ruin.



# REMARKS

OF

## HON. H. S. FOOTE, OF MISSISSIPPI,

IN THE SENATE, JANUARY 4, 1850,

*On the Resolution of Mr. Cass to suspend Diplomatic Relations with Austria.*

Mr. FOOTE said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not propose to enter into the debate now in progress upon the resolution of the honorable Senator from Michigan, [Mr. Cass,] at least so far as the general merits of the resolution introduced by him are concerned. Approving heartily of almost all that has fallen from him on this occasion, and concurring fully with him in all the leading views which he has so forcibly stated, I should be entirely willing to risk the fate of the resolution upon the speech which has already been delivered in its support. At least, it cannot be necessary, at this stage of the debate, that anything further should be said in support of the resolution, either by its avowed or presumed friends, especially as allusions have been made by the honorable Senator from Michigan to two honorable Senators over the way, [Mr. CLAY and Mr. WEBSTER,] which, it is to be hoped, will call forth from them such responses as will comport with the high character which they have heretofore acquired in the country, and serve in some degree also to renew in the recollections of their countrymen certain glorious scenes in our annals in which it was their good fortune to bear so distinguished a part. As a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, to whom it is proposed to refer this resolution, I shall gladly avail myself of the sage counsels which may be offered upon the grave subject under consideration by more experienced Senators, whether associated with one or the other of the two great political parties into which the country is divided.

My chief object in rising is to notice the remarks with which the Senate has been just favored by the honorable member from New York, who has been pleased to take it upon himself to complain that the Senator from Michigan has avowed (though in mild and moderate language) his decided disapprobation of the precipitate departure of the individual nominated to the Austrian court; who has not waited, as it was clearly his duty to do, for the previous confirmation by this body of his appointment abroad. The honorable Senator from New York says that he finds himself, by the conduct of the Senator from Michigan complained of, "exceedingly embarrassed as the friend, the personal friend, the unwavering friend, the devoted friend of this foreign representative;" alleging at the same time that he has "documents in his possession to extenuate, and, as he believes, to remove the accusation of precipitate flight from before the Senate of the United States;" and yet, he continues, "these documents are of such a nature that, in

justice to the domestic relations of that individual, he is not at liberty to give them to the world." Such are the precise words used by the honorable Senator, who, I venture to say, will not undertake to call in question my citation of them. Now, Mr. President, I must say to that honorable Senator, to the Senate, and to the country, that I am exceedingly surprised at the language which he has presumed to hold in our hearing upon this delicate and important question. I will remind that Senator that the Constitution of the United States has provided that the President "shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate shall appoint, ambassadors and other public ministers," &c. Yes, sir, "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate" is this appointing power of the President to be exercised, and not otherwise; and yet the honorable Senator from New York undertakes to maintain that it is entirely proper for an individual who has been simply designated to a foreign mission by the Executive, and commissioned during the recess of the Senate, and only a few days, too, before we were to re-assemble here for the purpose of either approving or disapproving such designation, and confirming or rejecting the nominations made to us, with his commission and salary in his pocket, to fly from the country before he has allowed the Senate an opportunity of determining upon the fitness or unfitness of his appointment. And, sir, the honorable Senator undertakes to maintain the propriety of such action on the part of his friend, not upon any ground of public policy, not because there was anything in our relations with Austria which made it imperiously necessary that he should go thus hastily upon the mission to which he has been preferred; but, sir, the justification which he sets up for his absent friend is based alone upon domestic considerations, of a nature so exceedingly delicate, as he assures us, that he does not feel at liberty to explain them at this time in our hearing, or to do more than refer to them with something of the mystical significance of the Pythian prophetess herself.

Sir, this is extraordinary doctrine, and upheld in an extraordinary manner. I cannot believe, for one, I will not so cruelly wrong that high officer and his official advisers as to suppose, that the President and his Cabinet have given their sanction to this rash and indecent conduct of their diplomatic emissary to the court of Austria. It would not be easy to persuade me that the intention of Colonel Webb to leave the country thus suddenly



was made known to the President of the United States at all anterior to his departure. The President has too often professed, and I doubt not sincerely, his profound respect for the coördinate departments of the Government, and his unwillingness to encroach upon their constitutional powers and privileges, to allow him, with any appearance of consistency, to participate in so gross an insult as has been perpetrated in this instance upon the dignity of this body. So often have those now in power avowed their apprehension of all undue strengthening of the Executive department of the Government at the expense of the Legislative, so much dread have they heretofore avowed of the increase of what they have emphatically called "the one-man power" of our system, that it cannot be possible that this most grievous encroachment upon the authority of the Senate, this most flagrant insult upon its dignity, can either have originated with the President and his Cabinet advisers, or have been otherwise than decidedly condemned by them.

And yet, Mr. President, the manner in which the honorable Senator from New York habitually puts himself forward as the special defender of the Administration, the *leadership* for which in this Chamber he has, on all occasions, so authoritatively assumed, might almost induce one to suspect that the language which he has held here to-day in defence of his editorial friend of the New York Courier and Enquirer may have been advised at the other end of the avenue, or may, at least, hereafter be approved in that quarter, but for certain facts, familiar to us all, of a nature to awaken not a little suspicion that the honorable Senator from New York is not in fact so specially and exclusively authorized to represent the Administration in this body as he seems himself to suppose.

It is not for me, sir, to become the regular defender of the President and his Cabinet against the assaults or blundering advocacy of their own professed friends; nor do I wish to be considered as intending on this occasion to render to them more than simple justice. Yet it is in my recollection, and I beg leave to remind honorable Senators of the fact, that early last spring, even a day or two before the inauguration scene of the 4th of March, the honorable Senator from New York, according to his own account of the matter, came to this city, (whether by special invitation of the Executive or not, I do not know,) and kindly took charge of the interests of the incoming Administration in connection with a most delicate and important question then pending in Congress, and, if his own printed statement be true, so managed matters in the two wings of the Capitol, in the course of some twelve or fifteen hours previous to the adjournment of the two Houses of the National Legislature, as to defeat the settlement of that territorial question which has put the Union in such serious jeopardy, and to cut off our fellow-citizens of California and New Mexico from that governmental protection and defence to which they were so clearly entitled at our hands. I do not assert, sir, that the honorable Senator was actually as efficient in this affair as he has himself claimed to have been. Indeed, I have always doubted whether his influence was very potentially exerted on the occasion referred to. Nor am I willing to take it for granted, upon any showing that has yet been made in the case, that the acts of the honorable Senator, as described by himself to

have been performed, have ever received the formal sanction of the President. I will add, that my respect for the high officer just alluded to, personally, in spite of my *political* opposition to him, will not permit me to lend easy credence to the statements of an indiscreet friend, who, with a view to increase his own consequence in the public estimation, may possibly have claimed authority to represent the opinions and wishes of the President and his Cabinet beyond that designed to be accorded to him. And, sir, it is chiefly with a view to rescuing this Whig Administration from undeserved discredit, and for the purpose of saving them from being held responsible for the extraordinary language of the Senator from New York this morning, in connection with the mission to Vienna, that I will take upon myself to go a little into the particulars of that nocturnal scene of the 3d of March last, in which the Senator from New York claims the honor of having figured so conspicuously.

I have said that the honorable Senator from New York arrived in Washington a day or two before the inauguration of the President. His advent had certainly been anticipated by us all; but I feel that I can safely assert that no one here expected him to participate very actively in the legislative proceedings of Congress, before he should have been regularly qualified as a member of this body, which could not constitutionally take place until the 4th of March had arrived. He reached this city, so far as I know or have heard, without producing any very profound sensation, either among the resident population, the governmental functionaries, or casual visitors to the metropolis of the nation, of whom a vast number had already congregated. There was no special ringing of bells or firing of artillery to announce his approach; nor do I recollect that the editorial notices of his arrival, in the leading prints of this city, were such as to awaken any particular attention to the fact that a new Senator from the Empire State had reached our midst, who would be at once appointed manager-general, on the part of the Executive not yet inaugurated, in and over the two houses of the National Legislature. At this period the memorable amendment to the civil and diplomatic appropriation bill had been introduced by the honorable Senator from Wisconsin, [Mr. WALKER,] had passed this body after a fierce and long-protracted struggle, and was awaiting the sanction of the House of Representatives. The hope was confidently entertained, by all the true friends of the Union, that the adoption of this measure would forever settle the territorial question, and secure to the patriots of the Republic a signal and permanent triumph over the accursed myrmidons of faction. Nothing had been more clearly ascertained than the fact that this plan of settlement, brought forward by the honorable Senator from Wisconsin, was the only plan the adoption of which could be probably secured. It was most clear to all minds, that if this plan should be defeated, the country would continue to be harassed with the perilous controversy then in progress upon the most exciting question ever agitated among us. It was equally obvious that no one could feel interested in preventing the settlement of this question, except, perchance, some aspiring politician, who, aiming to accomplish his own advancement to high public honors by sectional strife rather than by intrinsic merit, might be inclined to throw impediments in the way of all schemes of fraternal

and fair arrangement. Certain it is that the amendment of the honorable Senator from Wisconsin, with a liberal confidence highly creditable to its framer, intrusted large additional power and patronage to a President in whose election he had not participated, but in whose good sense and purity of heart all the supporters of that amendment upon this floor professed to have entire confidence. I believe I may add, without the hazard of contradiction, that General Taylor had himself expressed a wish to his confidential friends that this scheme of settlement should succeed. Under these circumstances, the honorable Senator from New York, according to his own account of his achievements, entered upon his brilliant career as manager-general. On the 29th of March last, he became the historian of his own exploits, as the author of a letter published in this city, in the columns of the National Intelligencer, in which he states that, "on the morning of the 3d of March, (the last day of the late session of Congress,) General Taylor, Mr. Clayton, the present Secretary of State, and Mr. Ewing, the Secretary of the Interior, severally called his attention to the necessity of having some form of civil government for California established before Congress should adjourn." Yes, sir, these distinguished functionaries are asserted by the honorable Senator from New York to have "severally called his attention to the necessity of having a civil government for California established before Congress should adjourn." This, sir, is truly a most surprising statement. The two houses of Congress had been gravely considering this matter for months. Many of the sagest men in the Republic had been engaged right and day in maturing some scheme for the settlement of this great territorial question. Whigs and Democrats seemed—in this body, at least—to some extent, to have concurred in supporting the plan of the Senator from Wisconsin. Some of the ablest and most experienced members of the Whig party to be found in the Republic were known to be then occupying seats in the two houses of Congress. The attractions of the anticipated inaugural scene had drawn together, in addition, a large number of the wisest and most patriotic citizens belonging to the nation. Instead of permitting the amendment of the Senator from Wisconsin to become part of the law of the land, and thus closing the controversial strife which had been so long distracting the country—instead of urging upon his friends in the two houses of Congress to cooperate efficiently and zealously in securing the consummation of this noble scheme of pacification—instead of calling around him the wisest and weightiest men of his party, and soliciting their advice—the President and his Cabinet are described by the Senator from New York as throwing themselves at once upon his counsels, and submitting themselves in this grave conjuncture to his exclusive direction. I venture to pronounce this the most astounding instance of reckless confidence that ever has been recorded by historian, or been depicted by bard or novelist. The elder Pitt once said, "Confidence is a plant of slow growth in aged bosoms." In this instance a mushroom rapidity of growth is displayed, which I feel sure must prove surprising to all who did not suppose the honorable Senator from New York to labor under the influence of a special hallucination in imagining himself to have been trusted so exorbitantly.

Well, sir, what did the honorable Senator from New York do when thus employed as the sole negotiator of business so difficult and momentous?

I will endeavor to give you his own words, as contained in the letter already referred to, so far as my memory will serve me for the purpose. If I misstate the import of the letter, I hope to be corrected by the honorable Senator. This, then, is what he said: "I repaired to the Capitol in company with Mr. Ewing. There I procured a copy of Mr. Walker's amendment, which I had not before read. I immediately prepared what I contemplated as an amendment to Mr. Walker's amendment, or as a substitute for it." Yes, sir, he immediately prepared his substitute. The subject was not new to him, as we all know; but the existing condition of things could not possibly have been known to him personally until his arrival in Washington. He was quickly called into consultation, and his capacities as a *manager* at once put in requisition. He required no time for deliberation; the operations of his intellect were as rapid as the movements of electricity. There is really a most marvelous celerity in the action of his mind, and so modestly described by himself in this epistle; the flashes of divine intuition can scarcely indeed be imagined to be more instantaneous. "Afterwards," he says, "I found Mr. Webster's proposed amendment, and I discovered it contained all the provisions I had contemplated, very tersely expressed." Prodigious! He actually found that Mr. WEBSTER's amendment contained all the provisions he had contemplated, and seems to have been not a little gratified that two great intellects (about the greatness of one of which there is certainly no doubt anywhere) should so happily have harmonized. The only difference between them appears to have been, that what may have possibly cost the honorable Senator from Massachusetts several days and nights of anxious contemplation and painful scrutiny, was struck out at a single heat by the honorable Senator from the Empire State. It certainly must be looked upon as a fortunate circumstance for the country that the amendment of the honorable Senator from Massachusetts found favor in the eyes of his illustrious contemporary; and perhaps it may be somewhat gratifying, too, to the pride of the last-mentioned Senator, (but I must be permitted to doubt this a little,) to know that his amendment has been honored with the special commendation of the honorable Senator from New York, both as to *style* and *substance*. He pronounced it to be *very tersely expressed*; that is to say, "*neatly*" expressed—"clear without pomposity." I regarded the fame of the honorable Senator from Massachusetts as a literary man as quite well established before; no one who defers to the critical acumen of the honorable Senator from New York will hereafter doubt the competency of the distinguished gentleman thus commended to draw up a short amendment in suitable parliamentary language. I hope I may be here indulged in a comparison without incurring the charge of profanity. When the Great Author of the Universe "in the beginning created the heavens and the earth," and had brought his goodly work to a conclusion, he is represented to have looked upon it, and to have pronounced it "very good." And so, in like manner, the honorable Senator from New York, glancing over the amendment of the honorable Senator from Massachusetts, and



finding it to correspond in substance with his own, gravely pronounced it to be "very good," and proceeded to act upon it without delay. "I took Mr. Webster's amendment," says he, "and, having shown it to Mr. Ewing, *who left the whole subject to my own judgment*, I visited many members of the House of Representatives and urged the adoption of it. Mr. Vinton, chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, soon informed me that the committee would report the amendment, with some slight modifications, to which I did not object." "I spent," says he, "the residue of the day in urging the adoption of the amendment of the Committee of Ways and Means upon the members of the House."

But his labors did not here end, Mr. President—nothing like it. To be sure he had swept all obstacles before him in one house of Congress, but he had yet to encounter still more serious obstacles in the Senate. Besides, the hour of midnight had arrived, and all the surrounding circumstances were strikingly unpropitious to renewed deliberations in this body. And yet there was one circumstance—possibly quite unthought of at the time—not altogether unfavorable to the contemplated scheme of operation. The members of the Senate might be found overwheeled with their severe legislative labors—some of the friends of the WALKER amendment, and of course the enemies of the new one, might, at that late hour of the night, be perchance asleep or absent, and the dark deed which had been plotted might be accomplished even after the constitutional term of legislation had expired. Note, Mr. President, if you please—and I call upon the country to observe—that the honorable Senator from the Empire State had never then occupied a seat in either house of Congress, and could not be inducted into the seat in this Hall, then adorned by an accomplished gentleman, now no longer among us, until the succeeding Monday. And yet he did not hesitate to take upon himself the performance of legislative functions, more ample in their scope and more difficult in their execution than any American statesman had ever before thought of assuming. Having been formally put in charge of this matter in the manner described, and the whole "*modus operandi*" having been left to his judgment, when his labors had terminated in the House of Representatives, he glided most dispatchfully into the Hall of the Senate, and there, says he, "I exerted myself to procure the assent of the Senate to the amendment, and I insisted that no different provision ought to pass. I continued my efforts until the Senate decided to disagree to the amendment of the Committee of Ways and Means of the House. It is well known that the whole design of a government for California failed by reason of that disagreement."

Such are the statements of the extraordinary letter published in the National Intelligencer, on the 29th of March last, over the signature of the honorable Senator from the Empire State, now present. And now, Mr. President, is not this a wonderful episode? Does it not abound in surprising statements? Does it not describe most remarkable achievements upon the Parliamentary arena? Is not this letter destined to awaken the astonishment of all posterity? There is nothing, I think, so striking in all the pages of history, ancient and modern, from Herodotus down to Mac-

aulay, as these exploits of the honorable Senator from New York, as recorded by himself. I have several times seen noted equestrians of the circus perform high feats of horsemanship that astonished all beholders. I have seen Harlequin himself astride of two horses at the same time, riding around the ring with an affected clownishness of manner, fitted to awaken among the uninitiated serious alarm for his safety, and yet presently descending again to earth unhurt and even exultant; but never did I hear before of a single individual, however skilled in the mysteries of law-making, successfully taking charge of two houses of a National Legislature, representing twenty millions of people, and so controlling the great and complex machinery of Parliamentary proceeding as to make every part of it perform its appropriate functions, strictly according to order, in both departments, without himself enjoying at the time the privileges of membership in either of them, or even possessing a right to raise his voice in debate. Indeed, in this instance it seems that the experiment attempted did, in point of fact, ultimately fail, as the substituted amendment of the House was not ratified by the Senate. And yet must the efforts of the honorable Senator from New York be regarded as not altogether successful, since he aided so efficiently in defeating the amendment of the honorable Senator from Wisconsin, and thus managed to keep the question of slavery in the Territories open, so as to secure to himself some faint prospect of Presidential honors in *future* by means of its fierce agitation in the free States of the North.

And now, speaking of the Presidency, let us return for a moment to the remarks of the honorable Senator to which I am now replying. He calls himself "the personal friend—the unwavering friend"—[Mr. DODGE, of Iowa, from his seat, "devoted"]—yes, sir, "the devoted friend" of General James Watson Webb, editor of the New York Courier and Enquirer. Why, Mr. President, how is this? How are we to understand the honorable Senator? I am assured by one whom I presume to be correctly informed, that until a very recent period indeed, the relations between the honorable Senator from New York and the subject of his present commendations were by no means of an amicable character! I am told that few presses in the Union have generally displayed more hostility to the honorable Senator from New York than that of the Courier and Enquirer. Lately, to be sure, it seems to have changed its tone considerably; and, I am told, it has actually ventured to suggest the honorable Senator from New York as the most suitable person to receive the next Whig nomination for the Presidency. Now, through the little window I have just opened, it may be that some rays of light will come in to irradiate the darkness heretofore enshrouding the subject of present inquiry. I can, at any rate, now see pretty plainly how it is that the honorable Senator from New York can be, and ought to be, the friend of the commissioned but not yet confirmed emissary to Vienna. I can understand not only how he might well be his friend, but also how his heart might pulsate with grateful emotions for kindness exercised and partiality displayed. But the word *unwavering* is still incomprehensible, as the animity between them is of too recent origin to have been yet severely tested, and may be destined to grow extinct before the fruit of honor



shall have been gathered from the tree of political promise. It may be that this friendship—so sudden, so tender, so devoted—is fated to evaporate whensoever our minister to Vienna shall have returned to his editorial chair in New York, and, under the influence of some new fantasy, shall have suggested the name of some other Presidential candidate in preference to that of the honorable Senator from the Empire State. I should regret this extremely, sir; a mutual affection like that under review, so romantically springing up in two young hearts, within whose recesses the cold principles of political and pecuniary calculation have never found entrance, should, for the honor of human nature, be preserved in all its original freshness and fervor, until eager appetite shall be at last swallowed up in measureless fruition.

There is one view of this matter, Mr. President, that remains yet to be stated. The honorable Senator from New York tells us that he has documents in his possession of a nature to extenuate, if not entirely free from censure, his friend, between whom and himself an ocean now rolls its billows, but for whom he still cherishes a devotion as intense as that which he felt before time and space had separated them so remotely; but he says that these documents "are of such a nature that, in justice to the domestic relations of that individual, he is not at liberty to give them to the world." Well, sir, I regret very deeply, then, that he alluded to these documents at all. I regret it, sir, for the sake of the individual chiefly interested, whose character, and perhaps that of a portion of his family, may suffer serious detriment from the superserviceable zeal of his champion on this floor. If this topic had not been introduced, we might have supposed that some public reasons, not proper to be disclosed, connected with our diplomatic relations with Austria, had instigated the precipitate flight of this renowned Mercury of the press across the stormy ocean. Now, through the indiscretion of his most loving advocate, we know that no such public reasons have operated, and we know in addition that there are some reasons connected

with the domestic relations of this personage which have made it necessary that he should quit his native country in such ungraceful haste. Curiosity will spring up in all minds now, sir, as to the exact nature of these domestic reasons; some will conjecture them to be of one character, some of another. The newspapers of the country will take up the inviting theme, and edify their respective readers with various shrewd conjectures as to the cause of our minister's exodus. The letter-writers, a most prying, ingenious, and active class, will manage to cast still more and more confusion over the ample field of conjecture. Old men will talk wisely over the supposed domestic distresses of the unhappy Webb. Young men will jest sportively, and with all the ludicrous aggravations which a mischievous vivacity can engender. The whole country, sir, will be infallibly occupied for a month or two to come in considering the overpowering domestic woes which have come upon the once happy editor of the *Courier and Enquirer* of New York; and without some speedy explanation of the mystery now existing, the world at large will come to the conclusion, in less than three months, that General James Watson Webb, our nominated minister to Vienna, is the most unhappy man in everything touching his domestic concerns to be found in all Christendom. The honorable Senator from New York has certainly been particularly unfortunate of late. It was but the other day that he was very near ruining the fair fame, and destroying the well-earned popularity of the illustrious champion of temperance, the Reverend Theobald Mathew, by fixing upon him the odium of abolition. Now, he has succeeded in effectually disgracing his own special friend and editorial advocate by adding to the discredit of official delinquency the suspicion of domestic infelicity. Well might the unfortunate gentleman, who is now, perhaps, drinking Tokay at Austrian tables, or smiling joyously beneath the glances of imperial condescension, exclaim, with all the emphasis appropriate to persecuted innocence, "Save me from my friends, and I'll take care of my enemies."









